

# Job Skills

*Do your skills and experience match what employers are seeking? Skills can be learned in a variety of settings—employment, life experience, education, hobbies, volunteering—and you will need to identify your skills as they relate to specific jobs.*



## Your Employment Skills

### Show vs. Tell

Your skills mean the most to an employer when you show how well you use them. Demonstrate you have the skills for the job by giving examples:

#### EXAMPLE 1: YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Tell—Possess skills in teamwork.

Show—Provided training to over 100 new staff by involving them in important company projects, creating a better sense of teamwork.

#### EXAMPLE 2: YOUR INTERVIEW

Tell—I am very good with computers.

Show—In my last position, I created a database for management to track inventory costs. The system was easy and efficient and cut administrative costs by 65 percent.

The best way to identify the skills you have is to inventory them. Analyze accomplishments in your personal, social, volunteer, or community life to look for examples of other skills you have, even if you have not used them in paid employment.

- Assess and identify your skills: [UtahFutures.org](http://UtahFutures.org)  
Career Information System
- Market your skills and find employers: [jobs.utah.gov](http://jobs.utah.gov)

### FIND OUT WHICH SKILLS MATTER TO YOUR TARGETED EMPLOYER

Part of being able to market your skills is knowing what the employer is looking for in an employee. To find out what an employer wants, particularly the job specific skills, you must do some investigating.

1. Read each job description carefully. Highlight the skills the employer is requesting and compare them to your skills. If your skills match, then continue the investigation process. If not, move on to the next job.
2. Talk to people who currently hold the position about what skills they feel are most valued.
3. Ask about the company culture; is it more formal or more relaxed? For example, Southwest Airlines has a more relaxed atmosphere and puts emphasis on employees having a sense of humor.

Based on the information you discover, craft your resume, cover letter, interviewing examples, and marketing message to reflect how your skills, abilities, and personality will meet the needs of the employer. Refer to our **SmartStart** guide for more information.



## SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT

Top five employer-rated candidate skills:

- Ability to work in a team structure
- Ability to verbally communicate with people inside and outside the organization
- Ability to make decisions and solve problems
- Ability to obtain and process information
- Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work

*National Association of Colleges and Employers Job Outlook 2012 survey*

## Your Transferable Skills

Unlike job-related skills, which tend to be used only in one type of work, transferrable skills are abilities, aptitudes, and qualities that can be used across occupations, regardless of the type of work. For this reason, your transferable skills are often more important to an employer than those skill-specific to a certain job.

Suppose an automobile mechanic wants a job repairing household appliances. The mechanic should emphasize general mechanical skills, not specific automotive skills. The household appliance employer will be interested in the mechanic's general skills: the use of hand tools, mechanical troubleshooting, repair, adjustments, and maintenance of mechanical devices. The employer does not care that the mechanic can pull a 1963 Chevrolet engine, grind pistons, rebuild carburetors, and adjust ignition timing.

Transferable skills are not just from employment experience; they can also be found in the skills you've gained from education, volunteerism, and everyday living. In identifying your transferrable skills, don't overlook the potential in these activities. These skills can help you meet an employer's expectations.

### CREATE TRANSFERABLE SKILL STATEMENTS

Once you have identified your transferable skills, you need to develop them into statements that you can use in an interview, cover letter, or career summary. These statements should highlight the skills used to be successful

in the position and how they will effectively translate into your next job. In these examples, job seekers highlight their transferrable skills to show employers how they can be effective additions to their businesses.

*Retail associate seeking teaching position*—As a sales associate in a retail store, I successfully handled customers' needs every day and received employee of the month acknowledgements more frequently than any other sales associate during the time of my employment. To succeed, I had to be a patient and diplomatic problem-solver. Because the same kind of patience and creative problem-solving are required of teachers, I am confident I will be an effective pre-school teacher at your school.

*Telemarketer/phone survey taker seeking position in hotel management*—My work as a telemarketer required me to communicate with a diverse array of people, some of whom represented difficult challenges. I refined my communication skills to the point where I was nearly always able to smooth ruffled feathers, solve problems, and provide satisfaction to customers. These communication, problem solving, and decision making skills are exactly the skills that are noted in the job advertisement as vital to effective hotel management, and I am eager to apply my talents at your hotel.

**SmartStart**

Utah Department of Workforce Services  
07-28-0812



*Equal Opportunity Employer/Program*

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling (801) 526-9240. Individuals with speech and/or hearing impairments may call the Relay Utah by dialing 711. Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162.